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ABSTRACT

These newsletters focus on teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to adult learners. One article, "10 Strategies for Teaching Adult English Language Learners," includes such suggestions as the following: get to know the students and their needs, use visuals to support instruction, use authentic materials, model tasks before asking learners to do them, foster a safe classroom environment, use scaffolding techniques to support tasks, and celebrate success. Another article, "Trauma and Adult Learners," explains that besides dealing with disruption, political trauma, and mental upheaval, many adult ESL learners also face personal trauma and domestic abuse. This article presents suggestions for making classrooms a safe environment (e.g., listen to learners and allow their concerns about violence to surface in one form or another, offer content and activities that allow learners to share information about themselves, find out about community resources, and do not assume that all immigrant learners have experienced trauma). These newsletters also include resource updates, book reviews, a list of publications by the National Center for ESL Literacy Education, and news notes on adult ESL education. (SM) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education)

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NCLEnotes

Vol. 10, No. 1 • Summer 2001

NATIONAL CENTER FOR ESL LITERACY EDUCATION www.cal.org/ncle

Trauma and Adult Learners

English as a second language (ESL) practitioners are familiar with adult learners' stories of disruption, political trauma, and mental upheaval. Until recently, however, little attention has been paid to personal trauma and domestic abuse.

Acknowledgment of the prevalence of violence experienced by those in the adult ESL and literacy community is critical to the development of instructional approaches that make classrooms safer and learning more possible for adult immigrant learners.

While most domestic violence is inflicted by men against women, it is also perpetrated by women against men, within same-sex relationships, and intergenerationally. Because language learning demands control, connection, and meaning, adults experiencing effects of past or current trauma are particularly challenged in learning a new language. They may show symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, clinical depression, or emotional distress. They may also experience concentration and memory loss. Regardless of an individual's experience with violence, torture, or abuse, being an adult learner can often be intimidating.

Challenges

Batterers strive to isolate their victims. For immigrant or refugee women, this isolation is exacerbated by language and culture differences that make finding safe options daunting. Loss of immigration status and of custody of children are threats often used by batterers.

Although every culture accepts violence to some degree, in every culture people are beginning to realize that violence is no longer acceptable. Thinking that cultural groups must be left alone to sort out their own differences only supports the violators. On the other hand, imposing behaviors or beliefs on others does not necessarily change attitudes or behaviors. Adult ESL practitioners are urged to learn about U.S. laws concerning violence against children, adults, and the elderly; about domestic

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How are we doing?

This issue of *NCLEnotes* includes our 2001 User Survey. To ensure that we continue to provide adult ESL practitioners with services and publications that are relevant to their professions, we ask that you take a few minutes and answer these questions. Results will be published in the next issue of the newsletter. Thank you!

In this issue of NCLEnotes, *we talk with Tom Mueller, ESL Coordinator, Laubach Literacy Action, and NCLE board member.*

His NCLE's Worth

Miriam Burt: How did you get started in adult ESL instruction, Tom?

Tom Mueller: All my life I've been enamored with other cultures. My BA was in German, and I traveled and worked in Germany one summer. Then I got my MA in Speech and Hearing and worked briefly as an audiologist. But it seemed I'd been a student all my life, and I wanted to do something else. I wanted to get away from the grind, to see how other cultures live. The next few years I traveled around the world, more than once.

MB: More than once?

TM: Yes, and I also traveled around the United States. I did odd jobs and saw

Continued on page 8

News Notes

EL/Civics Grants Update

For 2001, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) is awarding $70 million to support state English Literacy/Civics Education programs (nearly three times the funding for 2000). Every state will receive a minimum of $60,000 in new funding for EL/Civics. Above that, 65% of the funding will go to states with the largest numbers of immigrants and 35% to states with the largest recent increases in their immigrant populations.

The 2001 allotments can be used by states to fund second year activities connected to last year's multiyear EL/civics grants (OVAE, *Thursday Notes*, 2001, July 5). The balance of funds remaining after funding the ongoing projects will be distributed to eligible providers in a new, open competition.

For more information, see the EL/Civics page on the OVAE Web site at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/ELCIVICS/.

Perfect for Adult ESL Staff Development!

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ERIC Digests about Adult ESL are available in full text on NCLE's Website.

www.cal.org/ncle

National Symposium for Adult ESL Practitioners

A 3-day National Symposium on Research and Practice for Adult ESL Practitioners will be held September 5 – 7, 2001, at the Smithsonian Institution's Ripley Center in Washington, DC. The Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) of the U.S. Department of Education is sponsoring the event. The symposium will feature panel presentations and discussions on the *What Works* study, the National Reporting System, immigration trends and their implications, assessment, reading research, distance education, learners with special needs, classroom education, and challenges to effective practice and how they are being met. Teachers and administrators from all 50 states will attend the symposium. NCLE is working with OVAE to plan and facilitate the event.

Because the symposium is being held during International Literacy Day (September 7) and the National Book Festival sponsored by the First Lady and the Library of Congress (September 8), attendees will also have the opportunity to participate in these events.

Online Directory of ESL Resources

An extensive online directory of ESL resources is currently being prepared by the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics (ERIC/CLL), with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA).

The directory includes contact information for

- national and state ESL associations
- state literacy resource centers
- state education agencies
- state and regional TESOL affiliates
- regional labs
- technical assistance centers
- professional organizations
- publishers
- clearinghouses
- Web sites, online publications, and listservs

The Online Directory of ESL Resources' target audience covers the range from ESL students to teachers and program administrators to policy makers and funders. The Directory cites resources that are appropriate for learners of all ages—preK through adult, college students, and low literacy learners. Most sites are based in the United States and offer English as a second or other language resources for those living in this country.

The Online Directory is expected to be on the Web by September—just in time for fall classes! http://www.cal.org/ericcll/ncbe/esldirectory/

Answers to NCLE Staff Match

In the last issue of NCLEnotes *(Winter 2000/2001), we gave you the opportunity, through an example of a civics/ESL activity, to "match up" NCLE staff with their descriptions. How did you do? Here are the answers!*

Joy Peyton speaks fluent Spanish and has done seminal work on dialogue journals and interactive writing on computers with English language learners. As well as director of NCLE, she is vice president of CAL and director of NCLE's "parent" clearinghouse, ERIC Clearinghouse for Languages and Linguistics.

Miriam Burt lived, worked, and taught English in Europe and Asia and worked in the Philippines at a camp for Southeast Asian refugees in the early 1980s. Her adoptive daughter was born in Russia. She is NCLE's workplace ESL specialist.

MaryAnn Florez lived in England and now coordinates a volunteer ESL program at her church, where she uses her Spanish language skills to find out what's really on the learners' minds! At NCLE, she moderates the NIFL-ESL listserv and coordinates our Web work.

Carol Van Duzer has lived abroad and speaks fluent French; her family often hosts internationals working in Washington, DC, on professional internships. She is NCLE's adult ESL assessment specialist.

Lynda Terrill's first work with nonnative speakers of English was a teaching job on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. Since then she's taught both ABE and ESL classes. She is now NCLE's resident EL/Civics expert.

A naturalized U.S. citizen, **Dora Johnson** speaks five languages, including English like a native speaker, even though she came to the United States as an adult. She's worked at CAL for over 35 years and provides our institutional memory.

Lynn Fischer likes to put an artistic touch on NCLE publications and has taught adult ESL in the New York area. She is NCLE's publications assistant and does editing for other CAL projects.

Dawn Flanagan tutored adult English learners with AmeriCorps and taught computer classes to teen parents. Her calm presence and organizational skills are highly valued by NCLE staff.

NCLE staff

Joy Kreeft Peyton
Director

Miriam Burt
Associate Director

MaryAnn Florez
Assistant Director & Web Site Coordinator

Carol Van Duzer
Adult ESL Services Coordinator

Lynda Terrill
Acquisitions Coordinator

Dora Johnson
Research & Program Associate

Lynn Fischer
Editorial Assistant

Dawn Flanagan
Program Secretary

NCLEnotes is published twice yearly by the National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) and is distributed free to individuals and organizations on NCLE's mailing list. *NCLEnotes* is also published on NCLE's Web site at www.cal.org/ncle.

Please address comments, suggestions, or material for consideration to
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miriam@cal.org –or–
Lynn Fischer, Assistant Editor
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Washington, DC 20016-1859

Resource Updates

Naturalization is a complex and often confusing process for immigrants, particularly for refugee elders. In ***Citizenship for Refugee Elders: Issues and Options in Test Preparation***, citizenship expert and immigrant advocate Aliza Becker and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) offer a comprehensive and informative guide about the issues that affect refugee elders preparing for citizenship. The book outlines the naturalization process; gives an overview of refugees in the United States; and discusses social, learning, and health needs of elderly refugees. It also provides in-depth information on designing a program, creating a curriculum and lesson plans, and obtaining materials and resources.

Citizenship for Refugee Elders *(2000) is available for $19 from Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., 415 Michigan Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20017. (Tel: 202/635-2556; Fax: 202/635-2649; Email: clinic@aol.com; Web: www.cliniclegal.org).*

Do you wonder about your own family's immigration to America? Now you can return to Ellis Island through the **American Family Immigration History Center Web site** (http://www.ellisislandrecords.org). Visitors to the site can learn about the 22 million+ people who entered the United States through Ellis Island and the Port of New York between 1892 and 1924. You can search passenger records and ships' manifests by name and gender to find an immigrant's date of arrival, ethnicity, ship of travel, marital status, and age. Files can be created to hold copies of documents viewed. "The Immigrant Experience" section has immigrant stories and a timeline and narrative of U.S. immigration and the forces shaping it from pre-1790 to the present.

In the introduction to ***Listening Up: Reinventing Ourselves as Teachers and Students***, Rachel Martin lays out a great many topics that she discusses in the book: connections between theory and practice in teaching, implications of poststructuralist and psychoanalytic theories, the evolution of critical pedagogy, concepts of radical change, and self-definition and self-determination. It sounds overwhelming. However, what she accomplishes is an engaging, lucid communication of the insights and benefits that ongoing self-examination and reflection have brought to her, her practice, and the learners with whom she interacts. The comments, stories, and concrete examples that she shares from her years as an adult literacy teacher rooted in critical perspectives not only create a narrative of her own professional and personal growth, but also stimulate readers to consider their own.

Listening Up *(2001) is available from Boynton/Cook Publishers, 361 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801 (Tel: 800/793-2154; Web: www.boyntoncook.com).*

Newcomers and the Environment (Intermediate and Advanced) provides a timely example of how naturally and practically civics content can be integrated into adult English language learning. The environment is an important social and political issue in this country as well as globally. Each of the 10 topics covered (such as recycling, secondhand smoke, and the safe use of chemicals in farming) is introduced by a story about an environmental expert who is also an immigrant to the United States. Following each story are exercises for reading comprehension, text editing, and some on vocabulary and conversation. Key vocabulary words are translated into Bosnian, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Newcomers and the Environment, by Charles and Pamela LaRue (2001) is available from Multi-Cultural Educational Services, 832 104th Lane NW, Coon Rapids, MN 55433 (Tel: 763/767-7786; Web: www.mcedservices.com).

NCLE Technical Assistance

14. How often did you contact NCLE for information in the past year?

- ☐ More than 5 times
- ☐ 3-5 times
- ☐ 1-2 times
- ☐ 0 times

15. How did you contact us?

- ☐ Mail
- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Via the NCLE Web site
- ☐ In person

16. Were you satisfied with the information you received?

☐ yes ☐ no

Comments: _____

_____

17. How did you use the information you obtained from NCLE?

_____

_____

_____

18. What other services would you like to see NCLE provide?

_____

_____

19. NCLE is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. If NCLE did *not* secure funding beyond 2001, how would it affect you and your work?

_____

_____

20. Are you a subscriber to NIFL-ESL, the email listerv that NCLE moderates for the National Institute for Literacy? ☐ yes ☐ no

Please tell us about yourself!

21. I am a/n

- ☐ Adult ESL literacy teacher
- ☐ Volunteer tutor/teacher
- ☐ Adult ESL program administrator
- ☐ Librarian/resource center staff
- ☐ Postsecondary student
- ☐ Postsecondary faculty
- ☐ Other education professional (ABE, GED, K-12)
- ☐ Government (local, state, national, international)
- ☐ Other _____

22. I have been involved with ESL

- ☐ Less than 2 years
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

23. How did you find out about NCLE? _____

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NCLE User Survey 2001

For over 12 years NCLE has served as the only national resource center for adults learning English as a second language (ESL). In these days of high enrollments, high stakes testing, and high accountability, the need for technical assistance for those working with adult English language learners is great. **How are we doing?** Please help us evaluate and improve our services by taking a few minutes to answer the following questions. Then fold the survey and mail it back to us at our expense by **September 15, 2001**. (Alternately, you can fax the survey to 202-363-7204.) Those who send us their response by this date will receive a **Free NCLE Issue Paper** as a thank you.

NCLEnotes

1. Do you duplicate *NCLEnotes* or circulate it within your program? ☐ yes ☐ no
2. How many people on average read your issue of *NCLEnotes*?

   _____
3. What do you find *most* useful about *NCLEnotes*? (check all that apply)
   - ☐ Feature Article
   - ☐ His/Her NCLE's Worth (interview)
   - ☐ News Notes
   - ☐ Resource Updates
   - ☐ The Book Shelf (book review)
   - ☐ New ERIC/NCLE Digests
4. What suggestions do you have for future issues of *NCLEnotes*? (e.g., topics, new features, design)

   _____

   _____

   _____

NCLE Publications

5. Have you ordered publications from NCLE? ☐ yes ☐ no
6. Have you downloaded publications from NCLE's Web site? ☐ yes ☐ no
7. Please check the NCLE publication *types* you have ordered or downloaded:
   - ☐ ERIC Digests and Q&As
   - ☐ Issue Papers (e.g., *Research Agenda for Adult ESL, Workplace ESL Instruction*)
   - ☐ Resource Compilations (Resource Collections, Bibliographies, Annotated Bibliographies, Annotated List of ESL Publishers)
8. Which NCLE publication(s) have you found to be the most useful (titles or types)?

   _____

   _____

   _____
9. How do you use NCLE publications? (check all that apply)
   - ☐ Personal/professional development
   - ☐ Training others
   - ☐ In a resource center
   - ☐ Other (please specify) _____
10. What topics would you like to see addressed in future NCLE publications?

    _____

    _____

NCLE's Web Site

11. How often do you visit NCLE's Web site (www.cal.org/ncle)?
    - ☐ At least once a month
    - ☐ Monthly
    - ☐ At least once every 6 months
    - ☐ Never
12. Which NCLE Web materials or resources do you find useful?
    - ☐ Information on books and publications
    - ☐ *NCLEnotes*
    - ☐ Digests and Q&As
    - ☐ Resource Compilations
    - ☐ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
    - ☐ Worth a Visit
13. What other features would you like to see on our Web site?

    _____

    _____

    _____

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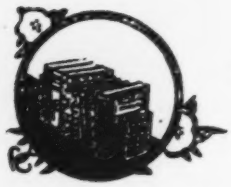

The Book Shelf

Coming Home Crazy: An Alphabet of China Essays
By Bill Holm
(2000, Milkweed Editions, ISBN 1-57131-250-1)

Reviewed by Miriam Burt

In 1986, Bill Holm, a college teacher and writer from southwestern Minnesota, taught American literature at a university in Xi'an, China. In *Coming Home Crazy*, Holm tells us about his experiences there.

Early in Holm's year in China he complained to an anthropologist that it was "discomfiting ... being enveloped in a culture which neither knew, valued or seemed to have any apparent use for Bach, Whitman, Samuel Johnson, Blake, Plato, Freud, Homer, Gustav Mahler, even Jesus."

The anthropologist, a fellow Minnesotan, informed him that in China he would either "lose [his] inner moorings, start to sink, go some kind of crazy, and just let it happen, or [he] would leave sooner than [he] expected not having learned anything."

Holm did not leave sooner than he had expected. He survived his year in China and learned a lot. When he returned to Minnesota, he observed that "after surviving a plunge into Chinese Craziness, your mind opens in a different way to your own country, and having 'seen' China, you are able to see what is in your own house or your own everyday life with new 'crazied' eyes."

The book is written from the perspective of these crazied eyes. The China Holm describes is one where transactions are conducted through *zou houmen*—literally, "go through the back door." *Zou houmen* is used to attain both bread and circus. Holm passes Marlboros under counters to get butter, taxis, and opera tickets. He avoids trouble with the police by knowing someone who knows someone in the department. In short, he counters the ubiquitous *mei you* (don't have) through connections: knowing the right people and using the back door.

Upon his return to the United States, Holm expects to be rid of the need for *zou houmen*. But, as he reports, "We borrowed bureaucracy from the Chinese, and it arrived with a back door. Out of one eye, a self-congratulatory American denies its existence; our of the other, he sees Vice President Quayle motoring off to National Guard meetings during the Tet offensive. Did we fail to elect him because he was a well-connected rich boy who flagrantly marched through the back door? We behave exactly as the Chinese do."

The China of Holm's essays is one of poverty and severe conditions. Heat is rarely turned on in winter, so people layer underwear and clothes to keep out the chill. Food is sparse; hot water, nonexistent; and crowding, everywhere. Yet, in spite of this, Holm's China is also one where the people *participate*. They delight in watching Mickey Mouse (*Mi Lao Shu*) cartoons on television every Sunday night. At the Chinese opera—in a scene reminiscent of Elizabethan spectators at the theatre—they sit on the floor, laugh, cheer, and chew peanuts, spitting out the shells. In Holm's English class, the students thrill to the romance and sensuality of D.H. Lawrence's short story, "The Horse Dealer's Daughter."

Bill Holm's book was published just after the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989. This brings a special poignancy to his essays. Indeed, in the introduction, Holm tells us he hopes that readers will "love the Chinese human beings, too" and be moved to work to "remove the nailed boot from their necks once and for all." He echoes this in the last essay of the book when he says, "We are connected to the rest of humanity and to their infinitely sadder, longer histories. We gain nothing by playing ostrich except conceivably, our own extinction. Either we remember, and make conscious connection to the moral and physical lives of others, or we die."

Read *Coming Home Crazy*. Whether or not we have worked and traveled in China—or anywhere outside of the United States—or whether or not we look at our country and the world with crazy eyes, the book speaks to us as adult ESL professionals. For, as we seek to make conscious connection to the lives of our students, we find that in doing so, like Holm in China, we learn at least as much from them as they do from us.

His NCLE's Worth *from page 1*

how people from around the world lived. I learned from everyone and from all my experiences: from sleeping in a tent in North Africa to walking through villages in Bali to selling flowers on the street corners in Texas.

MB: When did you stop traveling?

TM: In the late '70s I came to rest in Austin, eventually enrolling at the University of Texas. I got my MA in ESL while teaching and tutoring adult English language learners there.

MB: So when did you start working at Laubach?

TM: In 1985. At TESOL New York I interviewed for the Laubach position in Syracuse and got it. As a native of Buffalo, I was anxious to get back to New York. Although I had barely heard of Laubach at the time, I have always volunteered for all sorts of community projects. It seemed like a good fit for me. It also seemed to be a chance to make a contribution beyond the classroom, to have a national impact. I've been here ever since.

MB: Tell us about some of the changes you've seen at Laubach in the 16 years you've been there.

TM: Especially in the last 10 years, there have been changes in the instructional materials we create, in how we train tutors, and in the national certification of volunteer trainers. We used to have just one basal text for our literacy learners and one for our ESL learners. We now have an array of materials to offer in contexts such as ESL, family literacy, and workplace classes. In our training of tutors we have diversified as well. Up until the mid '90s we had standardized training, which was geared to one set of materials.

MB: So, a tutor in Omaha, working with three Iranian computer specialists would

have received the same training as a tutor in the San Fernando Valley working with an Hispanic housewife who had never been to school?

TM: Essentially, yes. So, in the mid '90s we developed the *Training by Design* materials (print plus video) to use in training tutors. It was a flexible system and could be adapted to the needs of the learners, the tutors, and the setting. We carried this flexibility into our certification for tutor trainers. We no longer use a one-size-fits-all approach with them either. Our "Guidelines for Effective Trainers" (in *Training by Design*) stresses elements of good practice and the necessity of meeting learners' needs.

MB: And now, with the upcoming merger of Laubach and Literacy Volunteers of America, there are other changes in store for Laubach...

> ***"In the field ... I'm immediately reminded about what a difference each of us can make."***

TM: Right! The obvious change is that we will suddenly be a much larger organization. The new "we" will have almost 50% more local programs affiliated with it. Regionally, "we" in the Northeast will finally have lots and lots of affiliated programs.

MB: And nationally?

TM: The new organization will have a larger and stronger voice to advocate on behalf of literacy, volunteers in literacy, and adult education. We will be able to work as one organization, and we won't be competing with each other for funds on the national level. The U.S. programming staff of Laubach have already started working with our counterparts at LVA. We're having informal discussions about our approaches to volunteer program management, training, instruction, and how we relate to the field. It's a very exciting time for us.

MB: How will individual programs be affected?

TM: The impact will be different from program to program. Certainly there are issues like accreditation of programs and trainer certification to be worked out. But local program staff will still make their own choices about materials selection, training approaches, assessment, and issues around how to start and run their programs.

MB: Is there anything else you'd like to say to the readers of *NCLEnotes*?

TM: How fortunate I am to work in the field of adult ESL, which I love, and to work for a volunteer-based organization. Laubach is a wonderful place, and the staff are like family. Some days, though, I wonder what I'm doing, as day after day the work never seems to end. Then I get a chance to head out in the field and work for 3 or 4 days with folks in a community-based program, and I'm immediately reminded about what a difference each of us can make.

For more information on ESL volunteers, see NCLE Digests, English as a Second Language in Volunteer-Based Programs *by P. Schlusberg and T. Mueller and* Using Volunteers as Aides in the Adult ESL Classroom *by C.W. Arnade. Both digests are available on NCLE's Web site.*

Publications Order Form

New ERIC Digests from NCLE

Reflective Teaching Practice in Adult ESL Settings
by MaryAnn Cunningham Florez
In reflective practice, with the goal of improving their teaching, practitioners engage in self-observation and self-evaluation to understand their own actions and the reactions they prompt in their learners. This digest discusses this process for adult ESL teachers.

Dialogue Journals: Interactive Writing to Develop Language and Literacy
by Joy Kreeft Peyton
What are the benefits of using dialogue journal writing with adult English language learners? What are the challenges? How can I manage the time and paperwork? This Q&A answers these questions and offers suggestions for interactive writing in the adult ESL classroom.

Finding and Evaluating Adult ESL Resources on the World Wide Web
by MaryAnn Cunningham Florez
Looking for a more efficient way to find resources on the Web? This Q&A examines the functions of various search tools, explains how to create and execute search strategies, and shows how to evaluate the resources yielded.

Civics Education for Adult English Language Learners
by Lynda Terrill
English language learning and civics education have been paired for more than a century. This Q&A discusses the events that have shaped civics education, defines key terms, and describes approaches and activities that integrate language learning with civics content.

Trauma and the Adult English Language Learner
by Janet Isserlis
This digest reviews key findings on the impact of trauma on behavior and how it effects learning. Ways in which practitioners can respond appropriately and assist victims of trauma in the adult ESL classroom are presented.

ERIC Digests (Free)*

- ❑ **Reflective Teaching Practice in Adult ESL Settings** (March 2001)
- ❑ **Dialogue Journals: Interactive Writing to Develop Language and Literacy** (Dec 2000)
- ❑ **Civics Education for Adult English Language Learners** (Nov 2000)
- ❑ **Finding and Evaluating Adult ESL Resources on the World Wide Web** (Oct 2000)
- ❑ **Online Professional Development for Adult ESL Educators** (Sept 2000)
- ❑ **Trauma and the Adult English Language Learner** (July 2000)
- ❑ **ESL Instruction and Adults with Learning Disabilities** (June 2000)
- ❑ **Mental Health and the Adult Refugee: The Role of the ESL Teacher** (Dec 1999)
- ❑ **Critical Literacy for Adult English Language Learners** (Dec 1999)
- ❑ **Poetry in the Adult ESL Classroom** (Dec 1999)

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Trauma *from page 1*

violence assistance options in their communities; and about culturally appropriate ways of dealing with the issue of violence and learners.

Implications for Practice

The following are suggestions for making the classroom a safer environment for adult immigrant learners:

- Listen to learners and allow their concerns about violence to surface in one form or another. A class in which a learner-centered approach is used enables community to develop among the learners.
- Offer content and activities that allow learners to share as much or as little information about themselves as they want, particularly when they are just beginning to study together.
- Allow learners to choose their own level of participation in classroom activities. Discuss with learners what it means to be present in the class and give them permission to be less than totally involved in all class activities. Consider setting up a "quiet corner" for learners who feel unable to take part in particular classroom activities.
- Find out about community resources and about what happens when one calls an emergency hotline. What information will be asked for? What language assistance is available? What assurances of confidentiality exist? If appropriate, create a class activity using the language and communication skills needed to call a hotline and ask for assistance.
- Do not assume that all immigrant learners have experienced trauma. Neither do teachers necessarily need to know who among their learners has experienced abuse. However, be aware that certain topics generally discussed in adult ESL classes (e.g., family and health) can cause learner discomfort because of past and present abuse.

Next Steps

Work remains to be done in the areas of teacher education, policy, and increased awareness among learners and practitioners in ESL programs. State plans for adult education might support development of ancillary services for learners attending classes for whom violence is a factor in learning. This should help to make the classroom a safe place and learning more possible for adult language learners.

This article is excerpted from Trauma and the Adult English Language Learner *by Janet Isserlis. Read the entire article on NCLE's Web site at www.cal.org/ncle/digests/trauma2.htm or contact NCLE for a copy (ncle@cal.org).*

▽▽▽

Janet Isserlis has a Web site devoted to the issue of women and violence. Entitled *On the Screen*, it contains information on agencies and on print, video, and online resources for victims of abuse and those who work with them. *On the Screen* is located at www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer_Center/Literacy_Resources/women.html.

For more articles on the effects of violence on adult learning and for the opportunity to give feedback on the topic, click on Jenny Horsman's Web site at www.Jennyhorsman.com/creatingchange.html.

NCLEnotes

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR ESL LITERACY EDUCATION

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10 Strategies for Teaching Adult English Language Learners

Adult English language learners come to English as a second language (ESL) classes to master a skill that will help them satisfy other needs, wants, and goals. Therefore, they need to learn about the English language, to practice it, and to use it.

A variety of instructional approaches and techniques support language learning and language use. Teachers need to examine these and decide which are most appropriate for them, their learners, and their settings. Following are 10 strategies to use with adult English language learners:

1. ***Get to know your students and their needs.*** English language learners' abilities, experiences, and expectations can affect their learning. Get to know your students' backgrounds and goals as well as their proficiency levels and skill needs.
2. ***Use visuals to support your instruction.*** English language learners need context in their learning process. Using gestures, expressions, pictures, and realia makes words and concepts concrete and connections more obvious and memorable.

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Her NCLE's Worth

In this issue of NCLEnotes, *we talk with Peggy Seufert, Adult ESL Specialist for the Maryland State Department of Education.*

Miriam Burt: Peggy, how did you get started in the field of English as a second language?

Peggy Seufert: I was a Peace Corps volunteer for environmental sanitation in Paraguay and got roped into teaching a 7:00 a.m. English class in a girls' high school. I realized that with an M.A. in teaching ESL, I could continue to live and travel in other countries.

MB: So you went back to school when you came back to the United States?

PS: Yes, I applied for graduate school while I was still in the Peace Corps. When I got back to the U.S., I enrolled in the MA-TEFL program at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. I taught foreign students in the intensive English program while I was working on my degree. I found, though, that I preferred working in nontraditional settings, so I began teaching migrant farm workers twice a week in the evenings as a volunteer.

MB: And that's how you got involved in adult ESL?

PS: Yes. After I got my degree in 1981, I moved to Washington, DC, and began teaching refugees at REEP, the Refugee Education and Employment Program in Arlington, Virginia. I worked as a teacher, testing coordinator, trainer, curriculum developer, and finally as ESL program coordinator.

MB: Where did you go from REEP?

PS: From REEP I went to Argentina and then back to Arlington and then Fairfax County, Virginia.

MB: I know you also worked at the Center for Applied Linguistics.

PS: Yes, in the late '80s. I reviewed computer-assisted workplace materials for native English speakers and did instructional design for an interactive videodisk course.

MB: And then you went overseas again?

PS: Yes. From 1992 to 1997, I worked for the Peace Corps again, as an associate director for education in Poland and Romania.

Continued on page 8

News Notes

National Symposium on Adult ESL

From September 5 – 7, 2001, nearly 100 teachers and administrators participated in the National Symposium on Research and Practice for Adult ESL Practitioners. The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) sponsored the event, which was held at the Smithsonian Institutions' Ripley Center in Washington, DC. NCLE worked with OVAE to plan and facilitate the symposium.

State directors of education nominated the participants; representatives from all states, the District of Columbia, and the territories attended.

The purpose for the symposium was for practitioners and administrators in the field to share challenges, concerns, and successes in providing English language instruction for adults, and to learn about national initiatives, issues, and opportunities. Participants were encouraged to take information from the symposium back to their state and local programs.

Participants shared ideas, heard from researchers and expert practitioners, and discussed the latest initiatives in adult ESL education. Topics covered included

- current research on adults learning to read in English as a second language,
- challenges of teaching adult ESL and effective practices in instruction,
- project-based learning,
- using museum artifacts for literacy activities,
- assessment,
- distance education,
- ESL learners with special needs,
- civics education,
- National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS),
- professional development, and
- immigration trends and issues.

Proceedings from the symposium will be available in June 2002 in print version and on NCLE's Web site.

Top to bottom: Symposium participants discuss concerns and successes; NCLE staff member Lynda Terrill talks about project-based learning; participants Wilson Tam (Guam) and Danny Sheffield (Arkansas) network.

Panel Discusses New Millennium

Over 65 participants attended a NCLE-sponsored panel discussion on Adult ESL Practice for the New Millennium in February 2001. Panelists discussed EL/civics grants, learning disabilities and adult English language learners, what works for beginning-level learners, workplace issues, and working conditions for instructors. Proceedings from the discussions are posted on NCLE's Web site and include visual aids and links to organizations and resources on adult ESL.

See you in Salt Lake City

What do Baltimore, Maryland; Ann Arbor, Michigan; Lafayette, Louisiana; Harrisonburg, Virginia; and Degray Lake, Arkansas, have in common? These are some of the diverse cities where NCLE staff have recently given presentations and trainings.

Salt Lake City, Utah, is our next stop. The 2002 Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) annual convention will be held there from April 9 –13. The theme of this year's convention is "Language and the Human Spirit."

NCLE will be giving workshops, attending presentations and meetings, and staffing the Center for Applied Linguistics' exhibit booth.

NCLE workshops will include topics on assessment, civics education, heritage languages, and reading research. Dates, times, and locations will be posted on NCLE's Web site.

TESOL's Web site provides information about the convention and allows you to register and reserve housing online (http://www.tesol.org/conv/index-conv.html).

2001 NCLE User Survey

Who reads *NCLEnotes*? What other NCLE resources are used? How are they used? These are just a few of the questions from the NCLE user survey that appeared in the last issue. Over 100 people responded, yielding valuable data, not only on whom you, our readers, are, but also on how NCLE contributes to and can best serve the field of adult ESL instruction.

Forty-seven percent of the respondents identify themselves as adult ESL literacy teachers, 30% as adult ESL program administrators, 20% as volunteer tutors or teachers, 4% as library or resource center staff, and 26% as other educational or government professionals—many shouldering more than one responsibility. Thirty-six percent have more than 10 years experience in adult ESL and 39% have less than 5 years. This last statistic is up from 22% in the 1998 survey, perhaps reflecting the growth in the number of adult English language learners in our nation and the increase in personnel to serve them.

The most useful NCLE resources—whether ordered through the mail (by 52% of the respondents) or accessed via the NCLE web site (by 42%)—are the digests and Q&As. Web users also rank the FAQs, notices of books and publications, *NCLEnotes* online, and the resource compilations as very useful. Fifty-five percent have contacted NCLE staff for technical assistance—17% via the Web, 13% by phone, 11% by email, and 15% in person through NCLE workshops. We are pleased to say that not one reported dissatisfaction with the response!

How do respondents use these resources? Seventy percent say they use NCLE resources for personal and professional development and 30% use them in training others. Nearly half of our readers say that they pass *NCLEnotes* on to others to read—some to as many as 20 other readers. One respondent characterized NCLE as a "unique and valuable pipeline to resources and information that are not available anywhere else."

What topics would respondents like to see addressed in NCLE publications in the upcoming months? Assessment and testing; working with beginning level learners, particularly those who have limited literacy skills in the native language; cultural issues; health; and citizenship all received multiple mention. All comments were read, recorded, and will receive our consideration as we plan our upcoming publications.

A special thanks to each of you who took the time to answer the survey so we could know who you are and how we are serving you. Special kudos to Faith Fernalld of Edmonton, Canada, who noticed a typo in Question 11, "How often do you visit NCLE's Web site?" The first choice was "at least once a month," and the second was "monthly." The first should have been "at least once a *week*." Thanks, Faith!

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ERIC Digests
about adult ESL
are now available in full text
on NCLE's Web site at
www.cal.org/ncle

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NCLEnotes is published twice a year by the National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) and is distributed free to individuals and organizations on NCLE's mailing list. *NCLEnotes* is also on NCLE's Web site at **www.cal.org/ncle**.

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Resource Updates

New Readers Press has added a literacy-level text to their ***Lifeprints*** series of adult ESL materials. A student text, workbook, teacher's edition, cassette, and CD-ROM are now available for learners who are developing reading and writing skills as they are learning English. NCLE staff member MaryAnn Cunningham Florez is the author. Visit New Readers Press' Web site (http://www.newreaderspress.com) for more information on the *Lifeprints* series.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) recently released a report entitled ***English Literacy and Language Minorities in the United States***. Using data from a 1992 National Adult Literacy survey, the report provides an in-depth look at adult U.S. residents who are nonnative English speakers. It reviews English language and literacy skills of this population as well as native language and literacy skills, education, and employment patterns and earnings. The full-text report is online at http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001464.pdf.

ESL for Literacy Learners is part of Canada's national standards effort, the Canadian Language Benchmarks. This resource describes the reading, writing, and numeracy skills ESL literacy-level learners should be able to demonstrate at various stages of their development. (Literacy-level learners are defined in this text as learners who are learning English and who are not functionally literate in their native language.) The publication is available from the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 200 Elgin Street, Suite 803, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1L5, Canada; Tel: 613-230-7729; Fax: 613-230-9305; Email: info@language.ca; Web: www.language.ca.

Tennessee and North Carolina recently published curricula for adult English language learners.

The ***Tennessee Adult ESOL Curriculum Resource Book***, a collaborative project of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the University of Tennessee's Center for Literacy Studies, defines the language, EL/Civics, and workplace competencies for the six ESOL levels recognized by the state (corresponding to the six levels of the National Reporting System for Adult Education, NRS). It also provides descriptions of student learning plans that incorporate the various competencies. Appendices on materials and resources, samples of student portfolio sheets, and information for new teachers are included. For more information, contact the Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee/Knoxville, 600 Henley Street, Suite 312, Knoxville, TN 37996-4109; Tel: 865-974-4109; Fax: 865-974-3857.

Building Together: The Inquiry Writings. NC Adult ESOL Curriculum Framework Inquiry Project was developed by Literacy South and a group of North Carolina adult ESL teachers, using an inquiry approach. *Building Together* explains the unique perspective that guided the development process, the curriculum, 13 lesson plans, and an assessment toolbox. It is available from Peppercorn Books and Press, PO Box 693, Snow Camp, NC 27349; Tel: 336-574-1634; Fax:

Cyberstep, a project funded by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education, has released its multimedia learning package, ***English for All***. This program of twenty 15-minute video episodes and accompanying materials is designed for use with adult English language learners. Master copies of the videos and CD-ROMs will be available to all state directors of adult education. Print materials can be downloaded (in PDF format) from the Web. For more information on the project and how to access the materials, see the *English for All* (http://www.myefa.org) or Cyberstep (http://www.cyberstep.org/) Web sites, or contact your state's office of adult education.

Ali and Nino: A Love Story
By Kurban Said (1937/2000)
Anchor Books, ISBN 0-385-72040-8
Reviewed by Miriam Burt

We were a very mixed lot, we forty schoolboys who were having a Geography lesson one hot afternoon in the Imperial Russian Humanistic High School of Baku, Transcaucasia: thirty Mohammedans, four Armenians, two Poles, three Sectarians, and one Russian."

So begins Kurban Said's *Ali and Nino*, set in the early 1900s, just prior to the Russian Revolution and World War I. Baku is an area of the world where East meets West below the Caucasus Mountains.

The novel (first published in 1937) was written by a transplanted resident from Baku and a convert to Islam from Judaism. Initially, the novel received little attention, until it was discovered at a bookstore in Berlin over 30 years later and translated into English.

Ali, a Muslim prince, and Nino, a Georgian (Russia) princess, grow up together in the trans-Caucasian region of Baku and fall in love. Their love affair brings into collision Europe and Asia, Islam and Christianity, and traditional and modern views of women. In the end, as the Soviet army marches into Baku to take over, Ali is forced to choose between his love for Baku and his love for his wife.

Before that inevitable decision, however, there are adventures enough to fill a book more than twice its 273 pages. There is the trip to Tiflis (Tiblisi), where Bacchanalian feasts are followed by sulfur baths and massages; a kidnapping followed by a chase across the desert where a rider on a golden horse overtakes an automobile; the blood feud and exile of Ali to a harem in Tehran, where he takes part in a religious procession of self-flagellation. Finally, there is the birth of Ali and Nino's daughter and of the short-lived Azerbaijan Republic.

The novel is soaked in symbolism from the East and the West. A prevailing symbol is that of the desert and the forests. Nino says to Ali, *"I love woods and meadows and you love hills and stones and sand. And that's why I am afraid of you, of your love and your world."*

This image appears again and again. It is discussed at length by Ali and an old Georgian nobleman, Dadiani. Ali says, *"The world of trees perplexes me ... it is full of fright and mystery, of ghosts and demons. You cannot look ahead. You are surrounded. The sun's rays are lost in the twilight of the trees.... I love simple things: winds, sand and stones. The desert is simple like the thrust of a sword. The wood is complicated like the Gordian knot. I lose my way in the woods."*

Dadiani replies, *"Maybe that is the one real division between men: wood men and desert men. The Orient's dry intoxication comes from the desert ... where the world is simple and without problems. The woods are full of questions....: The desert man has but one face and knows but one truth, and that truth fulfills him. The woodman has many faces."*

The love story is passionate and affecting, and the plot moves quickly, each chapter bringing a new twist to the lives of the characters, while revealing the history of this complex region. The images evoked by the simple, direct language are powerful, as when Ali describes the aftermath of a battle:

"Camels came into town from the desert, with long sad steps, carrying sand in their yellow hair, looking far into the distance, with eyes that had seen eternity. They were carrying guns on their humps, the barrels hanging down their sides, crates with ammunition and guns: loot from the big battles."

Although a novel, the book resonates with my own experiences of working with Middle Eastern students. As an adult ESL colleague said after reading the book—referring to Ali having to decide whether to escape to Paris with Nino and their daughter, or remain on the Gandsha Bridge at Baku and face all-but-certain death from the invading Soviets—"Can't you just see it? All the young, male, Middle Eastern students we've had? They'd stay at the bridge, wouldn't they? They'd all be at the bridge."

Strategies from page 1

3. ***Bring authentic materials to the classroom.*** Use materials like newspapers, signs, sale flyers, telephone books, and brochures. These help learners connect what they are learning to the real world and familiarize them with the formats and information in such publications. However, do prepare learners beforehand (e.g., pre-teach vocabulary) and carefully structure lessons (e.g., select relevant, manageable chunks of the authentic material) to make this work.
4. ***Model tasks before asking learners to do them.*** Learners need to become familiar with vocabulary, conversational patterns, grammatical structures, and even activity formats before producing them. Demonstrate a task before asking learners to do it.
5. ***Foster a safe classroom environment.*** Like many adult learners, some English language learners have had negative educational experiences. Many are unfamiliar with classroom activities and with expectations common in the United States. Include time for activities that allow learners to get to know one another.
6. ***Watch your teacher talk and your writing.*** Teacher talk refers to the directions, explanations, and general comments and conversations that a teacher may engage in within the classroom. Keep teacher talk simple and clear; use pictures, gestures, demonstrations, and facial expressions to reinforce messages whenever possible. Use print letters with space between letters and words, and do not overload the chalkboard with too much or disorganized text.

   It is certainly important for the teacher to understand the structure of the English language. However, it is not always appropriate to give learners explanations of each discrete grammar and vocabulary point. At times it is enough for learners to know the correct response.
7. ***Use scaffolding techniques to support tasks.*** Build sequencing, structure, and support in learning activities. Ask learners to fill in words in a skeletal dialogue and then create a dialogue of a similar situation, or supply key vocabulary before asking learners to complete a form. Recycle vocabulary, structures, and concepts in the course of instruction. Build redundancy into the curriculum to help learners practice using learned vocabulary or skills in new situations or for different purposes.
8. ***Don't overload learners.*** Strike a balance in each activity between elements that are familiar and mastered and those that are new. Asking learners to use both new vocabulary and a new grammatical structure in a role-playing activity where they have to develop original dialogue may be too much for them to do successfully.
9. ***Balance variety and routine in your activities.*** Although patterns and routines provide familiarity and support as learners tackle new tasks, learners can become bored. Give learners opportunities to experience and demonstrate their mastery of language in different ways. Challenge them with a variety of activities that speak to their lives, concerns, and goals as adults.
10. ***Celebrate success.*** Progress for language learners is incremental and can be slow. Learners need to know that they are moving forward. Make sure expectations are realistic, create opportunities for success, set short-term as well as long-term goals, and help learners recognize and acknowledge their own progress.

Teaching adult English language learners can initially be challenging for practitioners who are not accustomed to working with this learner group. While experiences and training in either ESL or adult education settings is helpful, they do not address all the issues that come into play in ***adult ESL.*** The strategies described here represent some practical, over-arching ideas to keep in mind as you start working with adult English language learners. 🕮

This article is excerpted from the NCLE Q&A, Beginning to Work With Adult English Language Learners: Some Considerations *(October 2001), written by MaryAnn Cunningham Florez and Miriam Burt. The Q&A also discusses understanding second language acquisition processes and facilitating learning for multicultural groups. It is available on NCLE's Web site (http://www.cal.org/ncle/beginQA.htm) or in print (202-362-0700 x200; ncle@cal.org).*

Publications Order Form

New ERIC Digests From NCLE

Using Music in the Adult ESL Classroom

by Kristen Lems

Music can be used to build listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills; increase vocabulary; and expand cultural knowledge. This digest offers strategies for incorporating music into the adult ESL classroom.

Beginning to Work With Adult English Language Learners: Some Considerations

by MaryAnn Cunningham Florez and Miriam Burt

Written for practitioners who want an overview of what adult ESL teachers need to know, this Q&A discusses issues in adult learning, second language acquisition, teaching multicultural groups, and effective instructional approaches.

Library Literacy Programs for English Language Learners

by Eileen McMurrer and Lynda Terrill

This digest summarizes the history of library literacy programs, describes current delivery models, and discusses initiatives in library literacy. A successful public library program that serves adult English language learners is profiled.

Reflective Teaching Practice in Adult ESL Settings

by MaryAnn Cunningham Florez

In reflective practice, with the goal of improving their teaching, practitioners engage in self-observation and self-evaluation to understand their own actions and the reactions they prompt in their learners. This digest discusses this process for adult ESL teachers.

Dialogue Journals: Interactive Writing to Develop Language and Literacy

by Joy Kreeft Peyton

What are the benefits of using dialogue journal writing with adult English language learners? What are the challenges? How can I manage the time and paperwork? This Q&A answers these questions and offers suggestions for interactive writing with English language learners.

ERIC Digests (Free)

- ❑ Using Music in the Adult ESL Classroom
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- ❑ Library Literacy Programs for English Language Learners
- ❑ Reflective Teaching Practice in Adult ESL Settings
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Her NCLE's Worth from page 1

MB: What did you do when you came back to the United States?

PS: I wanted to keep working "internationally," so I returned to refugee work at the United States Catholic Conference. Then at CAL again, this time as the director of the Refugee Service Center.

MB: And now ...?

PS: More change! Now, I'm the adult ESL specialist for the Maryland State Department of Education, and I'm happy to be back in adult ESL.

MB: As Adult ESL Specialist, what do you do?

PS: I manage the adult education grants for eight counties in Maryland and provide technical assistance to all of the ESL programs across the state.

MB: Can you tell us a little about the immigrant population in Maryland? Who are the adult ESL learners?

PS: Maryland's foreign-born population makes up over 10% of the total population. Most have arrived since 1990, so the demand for ESL instruction is growing. Less than 5% are Spanish speakers, which is very different from the national figures of 45%. We have large groups of immigrants and refugees from China, India, Russia and the Former Soviet Union, other Asian countries, and Africa.

MB: Are most of the new arrivals coming to the Baltimore and Washington, DC, metropolitan areas?

PS: Actually, no. Given the job market and housing costs, many immigrants and refugees are settling in outlying areas like Frederick County, Southern Maryland, and the Eastern Shore. The impact of even 100 new families can really be felt in communities that have little experience with these immigrant groups.

MB: And they will have an impact in the classroom, as well.

PS: Right. In some cases, it means a nonnative English speaker is in an ABE [adult basic education] class for the first time. In other cases, ESL classes are being offered in a program for the first time.

MB: What is the most challenging part of your job?

PS: Professional development. How do we offer training to a constituency that is overwhelmingly part-time, working only 4 to 6 hours a week in the evenings? When do we offer training to teachers who already have full-time jobs and family obligations? How do we do peer observation, coaching, and mentoring when few of the teachers who would be observed have solid experience working with adult English language learners?

MB: Yes, these are issues that many states are grappling with. Do you have any advice for ESL professionals in this situation, or for that matter, in any situation?

PS: Listen to your learners. When I was teaching at REEP in the early '80s, I taught morning and evening classes. I stayed around in the afternoons and did a lot of reading and other professional development, but the best thing I did was to listen to the students. There was a brilliant Cambodian doctor learning English at REEP. He walked with a cane because of injuries he had sustained during the Pol Pot regime, when he had been forced to pull a plow. He said to me, "Listen to your students. Americans often don't take the time to listen." Listen to them. It's the greatest gift you can give yourself and your learners. 🕮